

ROCHESTER FIRE DEPARTMENT



**why I became
a firefighter....**

serve your country...

serve your **community.**

Firefighting is a career I can be proud of.

Being a firefighter is a serious and rewarding career. A career that can be yours. Visit our website to find out how you can become a firefighter in Rochester, MN.



becomeafirefighter.org

2006 ANNUAL REPORT



July 2007

To the City Council and Citizens of Rochester;

I am proud to present to you the Rochester Fire Department Annual Report for 2006. Inside you will find many more details about some of the RFD's significant accomplishments during 2006.

The RFD continues to enjoy a very positive relationship with the community and our customers. This is reflected in the many letters and positive comments that we receive.

We have many challenges ahead as we plan to provide services for a growing, changing community. Through the construction of a fifth fire station, efforts at hiring a diverse work force, and the many training and emergency exercises we engage in with our public safety partners, we hope to be prepared to meet these challenges.

I would like to thank the City Council and the many business and community leaders that help to support us throughout the year. None of our accomplishments would be possible if it were not for your support, both financially and in your desire to provide high quality emergency services for the community.

Finally, I would like to thank the men and women of our Department who have dedicated their lives to serving in the highest fashion possible.

My staff and I are always pleased to answer questions about the Rochester Fire Department, its people, and its services. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Kapler
Fire Chief

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OVERVIEW

The Rochester Fire Department is a full time department of 103 sworn officers protecting the City of Rochester and the four (4) surrounding townships of Rochester, Cascade, Marion and the west half of Haverhill. Rochester, a growing community with a population of 97,191 in 51.33 square miles, is the third largest city in Minnesota after Minneapolis and Saint Paul. It is a regional city, home of the Mayo Clinic Medical Center, three (3) hospitals, a 3.1 million square foot IBM manufacturing plant and is served by an international airport, the DM&E Railroad, and access to an interstate highway.

The Rochester Fire Department provides emergency services with an authorized strength of 93 fire fighters on three (3) shifts operating from four (4) fire stations located as shown on the city map. Fire Headquarters is located in City Hall, 201 SE 4th Street, and is staffed by Fire Chief David Kapler, Deputy Chief Lyle Felsch (Administration), Deputy Chief Dan Slavin (Operations), Administrative Services Manager Curt Pronk, Training Captain Tim Bangert, Fire Marshal Vance Swisher, Assistant Fire Marshals Dennis Olson and Jason Whitney, two Clerical Staff and a Mechanic.

SAFER Grant

In 2006, the Rochester Fire Department added 3 more fire fighters funded through a \$300,000 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant from the Department of Homeland Security. The request was based on the growth of the city and the need to increase present staff levels for a 5th fire station to be added constructed in 2007. This is a matching fund federal grant, administered over 5 years, at which time the City of Rochester will pick up the entire cost of these additional staff, as permanent positions staffing the new Station 5, which will be located on 28th Street SE, 1 block east of South Broadway Avenue.

OPERATIONS

Currently, the department operates 4 fire engines, one at each station and 2 aerial trucks, responding from Station One and Station Four. Additional apparatus and equipment include 2 reserve engines, 2 tankers, 2 heavy rescues, 2 grass fire vehicles, a haz-mat vehicle, collapse rescue vehicle, de-con trailer, an emergency services command van, two boats and a rehabilitation trailer. The City of Rochester currently enjoys an ISO fire rating of 3.

The bulk of the budget for the Fire department is spent on Operations. Costs to maintain a fire department and specifically a fire fighter include: salaries and benefits, training, equipment,

apparatus, housing etc.. Keeping a healthy employee for 25 to 30 years is a primary concern of the department and city administration.

The Safety of our fire fighters is an ongoing concern of the department. We continue to bring in instructors and send fire personnel to training to improve safety within our members. A couple of examples of this are; taking part in Safety Stand Down Day where personnel reflect on safety and health practices. We promote safety every day but this is a day set aside nationally to encourage personnel to think and work safely. The department safety committee meets four to five times a year to review accident reports and to plan for a safer department. One significant undertaking was the chevron striping on the apparatus. This improves visibility of the apparatus when parked on the street or highway. The department is in process of reviewing its Vehicle Driving Policy.



EMS

The Rochester Fire Department continues to see an increase in calls for service. Some of the types of calls the department responds to are; fire calls, EMS calls and a variety of rescue calls. Public service calls include a variety of responses to “citizen needs help” calls such as to assist the elderly and infirm residents.

EMS has come a long way from the days of long response times by a private ambulance service to a multi-agency dispatch emergency medical response. Police, Fire and Gold Cross are dispatched to most EMS calls and the service to the public has improved greatly. Shorter response times are the most noticeable improvement, but more importantly we train together so we work more effectively at an incident. Rochester Fire contracts with Gold Cross to provide annual EMS training to our firefighters to stay proficient and keep up certifications.

HAZMAT

The department continues to contract with the State of Minnesota to provide a Chemical Assessment Team for the Southeastern portion of the state. Most of our calls requiring the equipment and training provided by the state are within our jurisdiction. Outside of our jurisdiction incidents are generally involving transportation and commercial industry.

Fire fighters are trained hazardous material Technicians and all Captains to the Specialist level. The Chemical Assessment Team is dispatched with 4 fire fighters in a CAT vehicle and trailer to assist the requesting fire department in identification, nature and extent of a chemical release incident within the southeast region of the state

TRAINING



Rochester Fire Department continues to push for state funding to support a regional training facility to provide a safe effective work environment for our fire fighters. If the department could improve in any one area for a marginal cost this would be it. There has been a need for quite some time to have a facility where fire training would be conducted. We currently do not meet the current minimum standards for live burn training. Live burn training should be conducted twice annually. A dedicated training facility would allow the department to exceed the standard and provide a more efficient and well trained fire fighter to the community.

While Training is a separate function of the department it falls under Operations. This is due to much of the training within the department being provided by Company Officers and other company personnel. With only one Captain assigned to Training there is the need for all members of the department to share their knowledge. This happens on a daily basis and is recorded as training to the department.

Fire fighters are required to receive a minimum of 280 hours of training each year to maintain the various proficiencies and certifications required to meet the needs of the Rochester community. As Training Officer, Captain Tim Bangert works to coordinate the mandated training on shift as well as schedule outside training classes and course work. The rapid change in modern technology dictates constant change and improvements in the fire service.

RESCUE/EXTRICATION

Fire fighters are trained and equipped to respond to a variety of rescue calls including vehicle extrication, high angle rope rescue, collapse, confined space, water and ice rescue situations. With three (3) major highways in town, as well as industrial complexes, waterways, recreational areas, and the Zumbro River with low-head dams, rescue capabilities are an important fire department service for the City of Rochester.

Since 2004, nearly 30 fire fighters have complete collapse rescue training as part of a state regional collapse rescue program. This training is very extensive and requires fire fighters to travel to special training sites specifically designed for this purpose.



RECRUIT ACADEMY

In 2006, seven newly hired fire fighters were trained in EMS, collapse, extrication, various types of rescue and hazardous materials as well as standard fire fighting techniques. The Training Division starts with recruits that have basic fire fighter and EMT qualifications and takes their level of expertise to the next level with all of the skills necessary to enter extremely dangerous situations or handle medical incidents in a competent and safe manner.

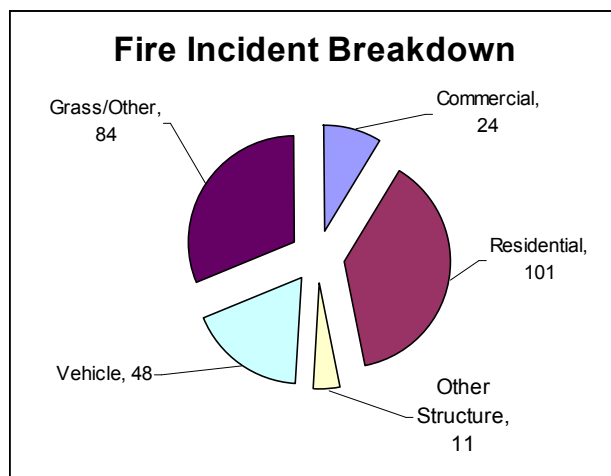
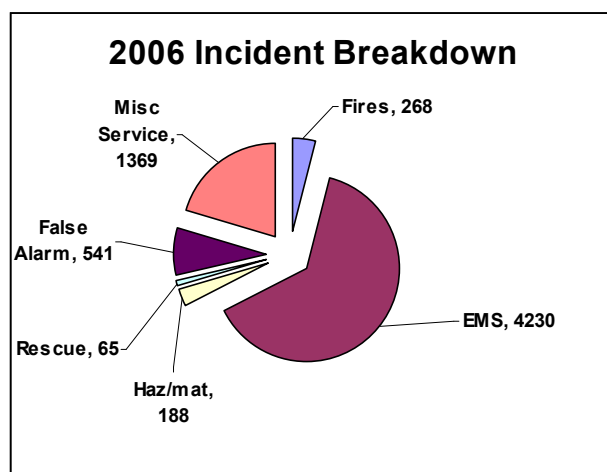
SAFETY

Fire fighter safety is our number one priority, therefore sufficient staffing of fire apparatus in accordance with national standards is a high priority. It is critical that there be sufficient

number of firefighters on duty to respond efficiently to any emergency, in order that enough staff can be deployed on-scene to safely and effectively remove fire victims from harms way and still be able to have “everyone go home”.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

One of the goals of the Rochester Fire Department is to continually work to improve the leadership skills of its members. The Training Division is responsible to monitor skill levels and provide a program of simulations and Company Officer Training that will prepare fire fighters to become tomorrow’s leaders and chief officers. The department uses an on-going succession plan, to identify, develop and provide specific training avenues designed to prepare fire fighter candidates for promotion to anticipated chief and company officers opportunities as senior staff begin to retire, over the next five to ten years.



RISK REDUCTION

The Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for fire and life safety risk assessment and mitigation roughly including fire investigation, code enforcement, and public education services. The Fire Prevention Bureau is headed up by Fire Marshal Vance Swisher, who reviews fire protection equipment installation plans, site development and supervises Fire Prevention Bureau staff. Two Assistant Fire Marshals conduct the actual on-site inspections of new and existing buildings and origin and cause fire investigations. Public fire safety education is accomplished through a variety of specific programs but actually is a department-wide function, led by the Fire Marshal.

Fire Code Enforcement

Rochester has been a leader in the promotion of fire sprinklers since adoption of the special sprinkler provisions for the City of Rochester in 1977. Fire sprinklers are actively promoted along with smoke detectors for all new construction and residential developments, recognizing sprinklers as the most cost effective method of fire control and life safety measures available today.

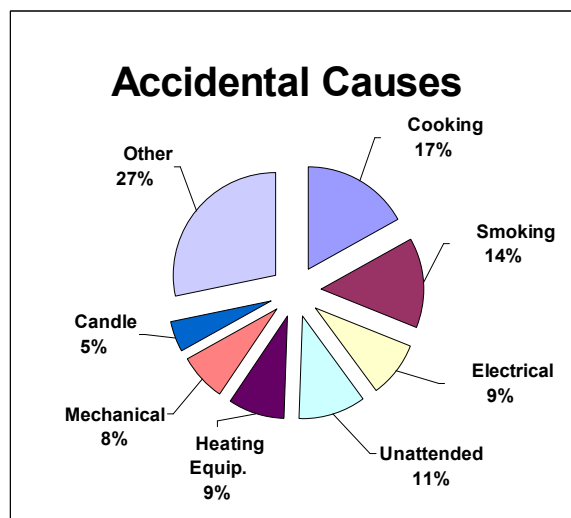
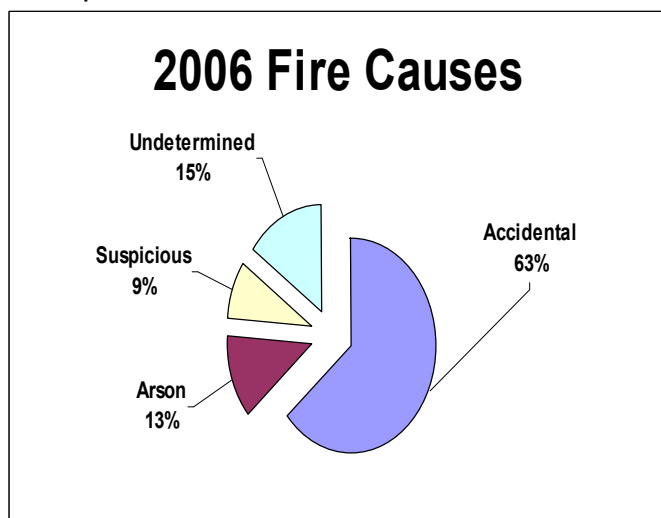
Fire Marshal Vance Swisher has a degree in Fire Protection Engineering, well qualifying him in his role. He reviews all commercial new construction building and protection equipment plans as well as residential development projects. Bureau staff completes more than 600 on-site fire

inspections of both new and existing businesses annually. Fire Department Permits are required annually for high hazard occupancies, as well as annual testing of fire sprinklers systems and restaurant kitchen extinguishing systems.

Fire Investigation

One of the initiatives of the Rochester Fire Department is to determine the cause and origin of every fire incident within in the jurisdiction. In 2006 fire causes were determined in more than 85% of the fire incidents. This is down from 90% of the fire causes determined in 2005.

To that end, fire department investigators provide fire cause determination support for Operations staff when the fire cause is not readily apparent. Cause and origin data provides important information for the public education program and general public information in an attempt to reduce the incidence of fires from known causes.



Public Education

The Rochester Fire Department utilizes a mobile Fire Safety House that has been used extensively in the 26 elementary schools to carry the fire safety messages to more than 5,000 students each year for over 10 years. In addition to fire safety, a juvenile fire-setter intervention program is carried out which is designed to identify children, with fire setting tendencies, early and work with the parents, counselors and law enforcement to redirect, educate and counsel the young offenders.

New Fire Safety House

The Fire Safety/Sprinkler House trailer manufactured by Mobility Concepts Scotty, was delivered in October 2005 and went into immediate service in Rochester elementary schools. In addition to demonstrating the important home fire safety behaviors, it also allows fire fighters to teach tornado take cover lessons as well as demonstrate the effectiveness of residential fire sprinklers. This trailer replaces an earlier model that was in service since 1996 and is now owned by the Owatonna FD.



Sparky's Home Hazard House

In 2004, the fire department was awarded a FEMA, Fire Prevention Grant, through the Department of Homeland Security, which provided funds to purchase NFPA Risk Watch curriculum for each of the elementary schools, a Home Hazard House table top demonstration unit, and a new Fire Safety/Sprinkler demonstration trailer. The Risk Watch curriculum is being used to advance a strong fire and general life safety attitude within the community through the schools. Classes are currently being taught to the 2nd and 4th grades levels.



Injury Risk Reduction - Falls

During 2006 the Fire Prevention Bureau staff collaborated in the initiation of the Rochester/Olmsted Falls Prevention Coalition to reduce the number and severity of falls by seniors and other citizens at risk for falls in their homes. Fire fighters routinely respond to more than 250 “assist invalid” incidents each year, many of which are by seniors falling in their homes and who are often are injured seriously enough that they require hospitalization and many are never able to return to their own homes again. Sometimes 6 to 10 calls per month may be made to the same individual. The primary mission of the group is to help seniors stay in their homes longer before requiring assisted living or hospitalization.

Starting in 2007, Rochester firefighters responding to fall incidents by seniors who do not require transport to a hospital, are offering these fall victims an opportunity to have a free home safety inspection by Volunteers in Public Safety (VIPS). These volunteers are trained to assess the home for fall hazards as well as other safety problems.

The senior is also asked permission for a record of their fall incident be shared with their primary physician for their information and they are urged to make an appointment to see their physician to check for medical reasons that may be putting them at risk for falls.

Administrative Services

becomafirefighter.org

In March of 2006, the Rochester Fire Civil Service Commission asked fire administration to research and come back with recommendations regarding measures that could be undertaken to attract more women and protected class fire fighter entrance candidates. To that end, following a year long study, the Rochester Fire Department began an ad campaign to recruit more women and protected class to fire fighting as a profession.

Working with a marketing firm, the Rochester Fire Department launched a website as the hub of the campaign. This site is designed to provide any interested man or women a variety of information on the job qualifications, physical requirements, colleges and training locations, links to other sites of similar nature and a direct link to the City of Rochester Human Resources Department for an online “job interest card”.

Rochester Fire staff are visiting high schools, colleges, Boys & Girls Clubs, and community groups to generate interest in fire fighting as a career at earlier ages to allow interested young women, men and protected classes sufficient time to acquire necessary fire fighter training and fire technology degrees, to be better prepared to take the entrance examination. Additionally, rack cards and poster ads are being placed in local restaurants, theaters, schools, national guard armories as well as outdoor billboards. Using real fire fighters of both genders and people of color, the ads proclaim fire fighting is a career “I can be proud of”; “to make a difference”; “to help people”; to challenge myself”; “to Save Lives” and “to be part of a team”.

Billboard



why I became a firefighter....

to be part of a
team.

becomeafirefighter.org

ROCHESTER
FIRE DEPT.
The hand to reach for...

Rack Card



why I became a firefighter....

I became a firefighter to challenge myself and **help people.**

Firefighting is a career I can be proud of.

Being a firefighter is a serious and rewarding career. A career that can be yours. To find out how you can become a firefighter in Rochester, MN, visit our website at **becomeafirefighter.org**

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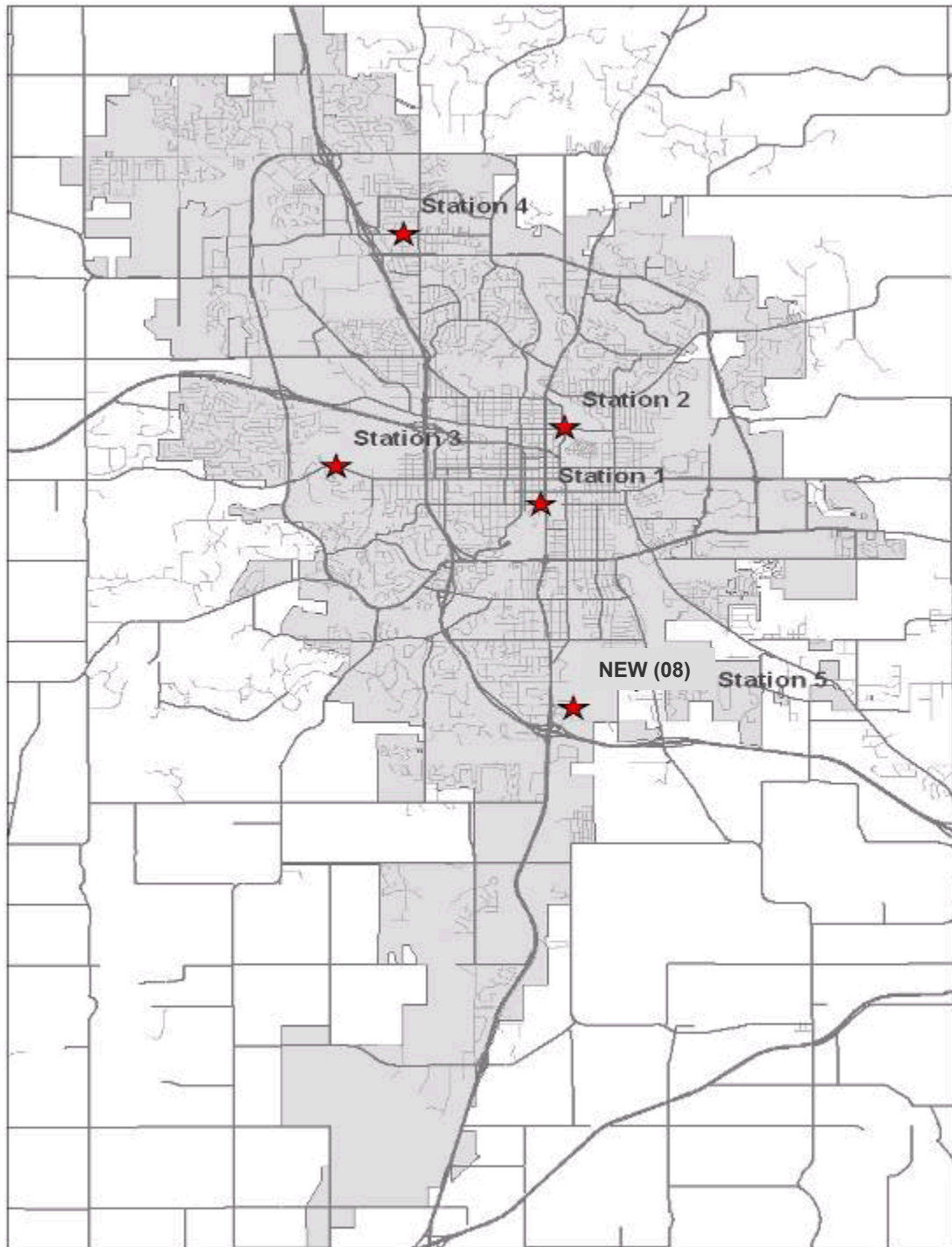


New Fire Station 5

Plans and preparations for a 5th fire station on the south side of Rochester were well underway coming into 2006. Locating prospective sites and the final purchase processes occupied much of Administrative Services Manager Curt Pronk's time in 2006. He worked with the Architect Yaggy Colby and Associates and a Fire Station Committee consisting of Captains Peter Slavin and Bill MacMonegle, Fire Fighters Brad Funke and Kris Jungels.

The design plan from Fire Station 3 was used as a basis for the final plans for the new station 5. The location is 28th Street and 3rd Avenue SE as noted on the site map on the following page.

Alvin E. Benike, Inc. was selected as the general contractor and construction is expected to begin in May of 2007 and is expected to be completed in June 2008. Engine 51 is in production and will be delivered in summer of 2007.



- Station #1 – 521 South Broadway**
- Station #2 – 702 W Silver Lake Drive NE**
- Station #3 – 2755 2nd Street SW**
- Station #4 – 1875 41st Street NW**
- Station #5 – 28th St SE & 3rd Ave SE (Under Construction)**

2006 Staffing Level

Fire Chief	1	Fire Marshal	1	Admin. Service Mgr.	1
Deputy Chief	2	Asst. Fire Marshal	2	Mechanic	1
Battalion Chief	3	Motor Operator	21	Clerical Staff	2
Captain	19	Fire Fighter	50		

Appointments

Curt Pronk	Administrative Services Mgr	2/16/06
Matt Mueller	Captain	11/10/06
Jason Whitney	Asst. Fire Marshal	8/31/06
Steve Swanson	Motor Operator	1/10/06
Dave Beagle	Motor Operator	8/31/06
Spencer Goetzman	Fire Fighter	3/30/06
David Christie	Fire Fighter	3/30/06
Josh Petersen	Fire Fighter	3/30/06
Eric Thompson	Fire Fighter	3/30/06
Adam Wallin	Fire Fighter	3/30/06
Chad Kuntz	Fire Fighter	3/30/06
Jeremy Meyer	Fire Fighter	3/30/06

Retirements/Resignations

Ross Parker	Retired May 30, 2006	31 years of Service
Dan Dinneen	Retired December 16, 2006	32 years of Service
Mike Toogood	Retired November 30, 2006	32 years of Service
Mike Nelson	Resigned November 26, 2006	1 year of Service

ROCHESTER FIRE DEPARTMENT **2006 Statistical Summary**

Community Protected

Land Area (sq. miles)	129.30
City	51.33
Rural	77.97
Population	109,380
City	97,191
Rural	12,189
Budget-2006	\$10,754,884
Per Capita	\$ 98.3
Fire Stations	4
Personnel	99
Civilian	4
Sworn Officers	103
Fire fighters	96
FF per 1000 Pop.	1

Incidents

Type	City	Rural	Total 2006	2005
Fires	253	15	268	200
EMS	4180	50	4230	3871
Haz/Mat.	179	9	188	148
Rescue	60	5	65	65
False Calls	512	29	541	680
Misc./Other	1303	66	1369	1579
Total	6487	174	6661	6543

Fires	City	Rural	2006	2005
Structural	132	4	136	102
Vehicle	42	6	48	38
Grass/Other	79	5	84	60
Total	253	15	268	200

Structure Fires

	2006	2005
Commercial		
City	22	27
Rural	2	2
Total	24	29
Residential		
City	95	67
Rural	6	6
Total	101	73

Investigations

	2006	2005
Fires Investigated	60	29
Arrests Adult	2	3
Juvenile	1	3
Juvenile FS Counseled	4	7

Fire Loss

	2006	2005
City	\$1,019,608	\$1,612,126
Per Capita	\$ 10.49	\$ 17.00
Average	\$ 5,860	\$ 12,594
Rural	\$ 287,582	\$ 436,600
Per Capita	\$ 23.59	\$ 35.33
Average	\$ 28,758	\$ 36,383
Total	\$1,307,190	\$2,048,726

Deaths & Injuries

	2006	2005
Deaths	City/Rural	City/Rural
Fire fighter	0 / 0	0 / 0
Civilian	2 / 0	0 / 0
Injuries		
Fire fighter	51/ 0	36/ 0
Civilian	0 / 0	0 / 0

Commercial Fires

	2006	2005
City	\$181,500	\$223,753
Rural	\$ 34,000	15,350
Total	215,500	\$239,103

Residential Fires

	2006	2005
City	\$ 871,328	\$894,715
Rural	132,000	\$432,500
Total	\$1,003,328	\$1,327,255

Fire Cause

	2006	2005
Accidental	170 (63%)	143 (71%)
Cooking	29 (17%)	29 (20%)
Smoking	24 (24%)	8
(5.5%)		
Electrical	15 (9%)	22 (15%)
Unattended	18 (11%)	12 (8%)
Heating Equip.	15 (9%)	18 (12%)
Mechanical	13 (8%)	10 (7%)
Candle	8 (5%)	6 (4%)
Other	48 (28%)	38 (26%)
Undetermined	40 (15%)	17 (8.5%)
Suspicious	24 (9%)	18 (9%)
Arson	34 (13%)	22 (11%)
Total (100%)	268	200